

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. In the Office Action mailed on January 12, 2005, claims 1, 2 and 15-17, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, claims 9-14 were allowed, and claims 3-8, 18 and 19 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended, claims 3 and 18 have been canceled and claims 20-32 have been added.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 15, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Woolf et al. '754. The Examiner states that Woolf discloses a method and apparatus for densifying a tooth portion of a powder metal gear comprising sintering a powder metal preform and densifying the preform by axially passing the preform through a set of dies wherein the dies contain broadened portions that allow for a tooth of the preform to expand and further contains a spacer. The Examiner further states that the hourglass requirement of the instant claims is met by the protrusion and recession sections. The Examiner finally states that the prior art contains no teaching or suggestion of passing the preform through a helical configuration.

Applicant has accordingly amended the rejected claims to include the requirement of a helically formed die. Applicant has accordingly canceled allowed claims 3 and 18 which previously contained this limitation.

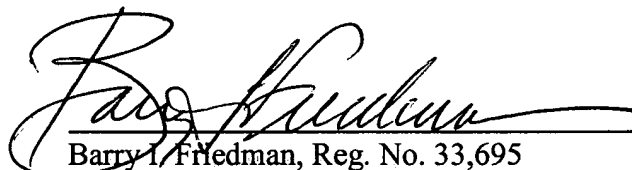
Applicant has also added new claims 20-32 which generally correspond to prior claims 1-8 and 15-19, with the limitation of the presence of a grooved spacer extending between the die elements. In each case, the grooved spacer provides a continuous track between the tooth profiles of each successive die layer. Woolf neither teaches nor suggests this feature, instead

disclosing a recessed spacer that has no interaction with the teeth of the preform between the die layers.

Applicant respectfully requests that the application is in condition for allowance in light of the remarks made above. Reconsideration is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

METZ LEWIS LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry I. Friedman", is written over a horizontal line.

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